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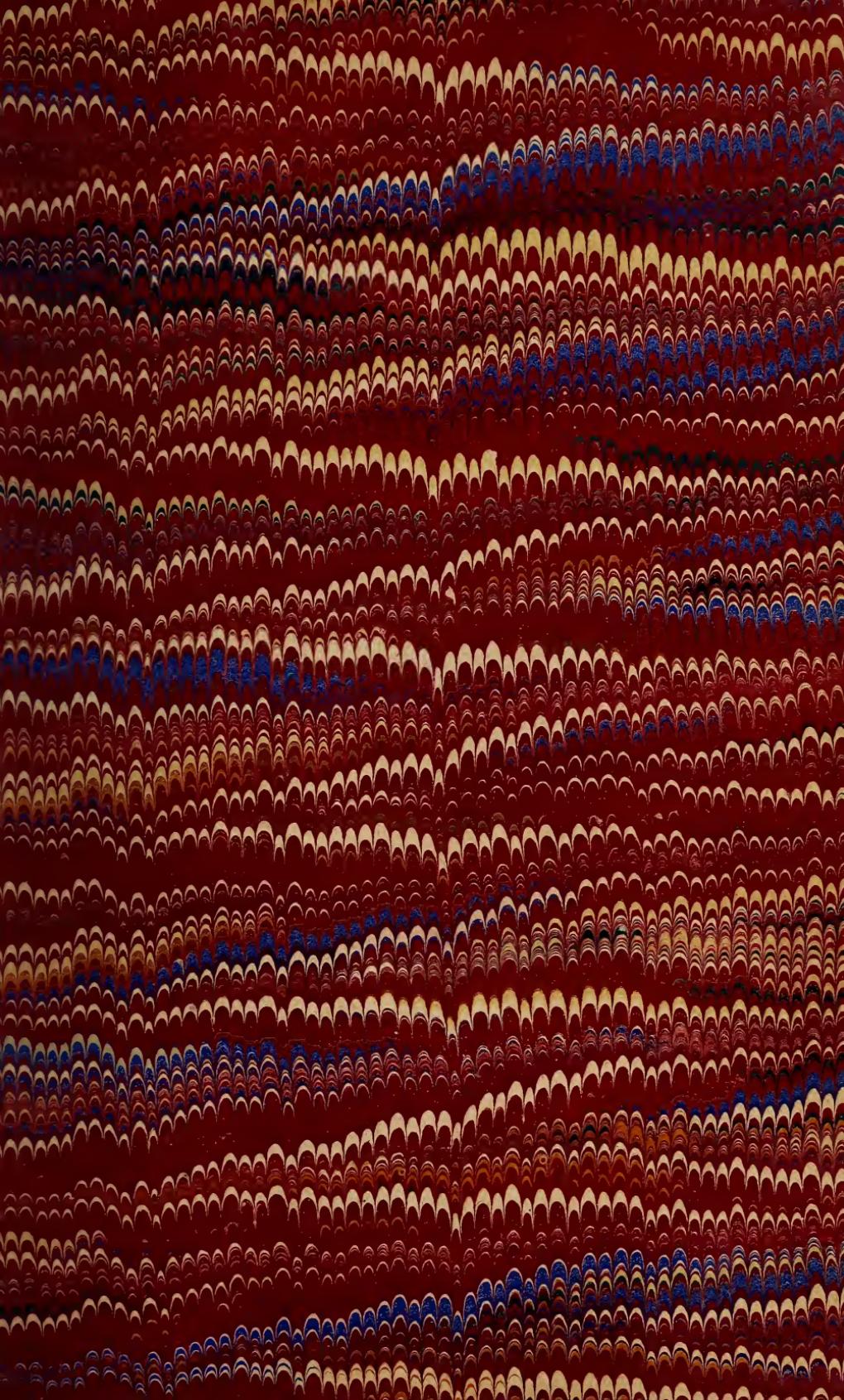
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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.



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UNION THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, PRINCE EDWARD VA.

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D^r. GRAHAM.

H. B. BROWN, DEL.



A D D R E S S E S

OF

REV. S. L. GRAHAM, D.D.,

AND OF

REV. F. S. SAMPSON, D.D.,

AT THEIR

INAUGURATION, JULY 11, 1850,

THE FORMER AS PROFESSOR OF ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY, THE
LATTER AS PROFESSOR OF ORIENTAL LITERATURE,

IN THE

UNION THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY,

PRINCE EDWARD COUNTY, VA.

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ADDRESS OF DR. GRAHAM.

A Discourse, delivered June 11th, 1850, on the occasion of his inauguration as Professor of Ecclesiastical History and Polity in Union Theological Seminary, Prince Edward County, Virginia, by S. L. GRAHAM, D.D.

By an order of the Board of Directors, I am required this day to deliver a discourse on History. Though the resolution does not give the purpose for which this exercise is required, yet it may be safely inferred to have been to express their conviction that this branch of study ought to be elevated to a place of dignity and importance which it has not heretofore occupied in this institution, as well as to ascertain in what manner it is to be taught. As these are praiseworthy and laudable objects, I cheerfully accept your appointment, and now proceed to address myself to the fulfilment of it.

In some minds there is a conviction that the study of history is light and easy, requiring the exercise of no faculty, except memory. No mistake can be greater. The evidence by which a historical fact is established, often requires most laborious research to ascertain it, and great soundness of judgment to judge of that evidence after it is ascertained. All party spirit must be renounced, and evidence must be regarded purely on its own merits. This is no easy attainment. The prejudices, generated for example by the great controversy which agitated and divided England in the seventeenth century, have been transmitted to our day ; and men can now be found who are as ardent haters of Cromwell

and the Puritans, as were the partisans of the arbitrary and tyrannical Stuarts ; nor need it be disguised that there is still also a spirit of indiscriminate justification of the errors and the wrongs of those Puritans who overthrew the English throne, and so changed the English constitution, as to check the absolute prerogative of the sovereign, and to secure the rights of the subject. The same remark may be made in reference to many other controversies. There are no subjects, however, on which we are required to sift evidence with greater care, than on those which relate to the controversies between Catholics and Protestants. The facts in reference to past controversies are so startling and astounding, and are so entirely in conflict with our American ideas of liberty and humanity, and scriptural truth, that we naturally require the most unquestionable evidence of their truth, before we receive them. For example, it would not be safe to assert that it is a doctrine of the Catholic communion that no faith ought to be kept with heretics ; for the council of Constance, the first and last that so decided, is wholly rejected by some Catholics, and is received as a general council only in its last sessions by others. The best authorities, as Bellarmine and others, only allow it a partial authority ; and it is doubtful whether this obnoxious decree was enacted before or after it was acknowledged to be a general council. History can give many examples, before and after the council of Constance, in which faith was not kept with heretics ; but it must be acknowledged that protestants have not always been remarkable for keeping the faith of treaties and fulfilling promises.

The knowledge of languages is necessary to the successful study of history. Many of the controversies of the church owe their origin, in the first instance, to the unfortunate

and imprudent use of new terms. Thus, the Nestorian controversy may be regarded as still a difficult question, on account of the ambiguity of the language used on the occasion. That the ambitious Cyril, under the influence of the passionate excitement by which he seems to have been governed, did injustice to his opponent, is now generally admitted; and after the lapse of fourteen hundred years, tardy justice has been done to a persecuted man; and, though condemned by a council, it is probable that Nestorius was only liable to censure on account of the novel and unauthorized phraseology he used in reference to Jesus Christ, and on account of the needless obstinacy with which he persisted in the use of language which gave offence, and which was, to say the least, ambiguous. Indeed, a critical knowledge of language is necessary, to enable one to understand the early controversies of the church. And no language will be more necessary in this respect than the Greek, as it is well known that the activity and acuteness of the Greek mind, and the disputatious and confident spirit produced by the Greek philosophy, originated nearly all of the doctrinal controversies of the early ages of Christianity; while the Latin mind slept on in its lethargic slumber, or only awaked to smile at the combatants, or to decide on a subject which was imperfectly understood.

The plan of this seminary declares, that the object to be attained in this department of study is the "history of theological doctrine, and its influence on religion, morals, literature, and civil and religious liberty, from the Christian era to the present time." This simple statement presents a most comprehensive view of the subject, and owes its origin to that great and good man whose likeness adorns our chapel, and whose profound and philosophical mind caught

the true and only rational view of church history. I allude to Dr. John Holt Rice, who, if any man can lay claim to that honor, was the founder of this institution. Can the end here sketched out be attained ? If it can, then history will become truly a science, and a school in which we may learn the most important lessons of wisdom. But it cannot be done in a day. It must be the result of long and patient investigation. The way will be weary ; but if the end can be gained, the fruit will be worthy of all the toil. Let us inquire whether the end proposed can be accomplished. We understand it to be what is known as the philosophy of history. The object of it is, to trace effects up to their causes ; to generalize the facts of history, and to draw from them those just conclusions which a sound philosophy teaches us are to be derived from them. It assumes that God governs the world, so as to accomplish a wise and benevolent purpose ; and that history is one of the schools in which he designs that we shall learn wisdom ; that if God is in history, there must be some great problems worked out for man's benefit. In the past, experiments have been made, as to what man can do,—as to the tendencies of his nature,—as to the effect of certain principles on his moral conduct and his happiness ; and it is the duty of the historian to gather up these facts, to arrange and classify them, and, as far as the nature of the subject will admit of it, apply the principles of the inductive philosophy, and to draw just conclusions from them. It is true, that in this case, it is not man himself, performing his experiments on dead matter, for his own benefit and improvement, and that of others ; but man makes the experiment as man, endowed with a complex nature, with body and soul, the subject of moral government, a member of the social compact, and the

recipient of religious impressions to an almost unlimited extent, and from a great variety of means and instrumentalities. The operation of these different causes on man's intellectual, moral, and social nature produces results very various; still there is a unity which may be reached on this subject as well as others. We may ascertain what causes have been at work, and what effects have been produced in a given case, with a probability so strong as to reach almost to certainty. And when the mind has, on solid reasons, arrived at some general result of this kind, something valuable is certainly gained. History is not to be regarded as a mere chaos of facts, without order and without object.—It is not intended to be a mere plaything for the pedant, that he may signalize the accuracy of his memory, by detailing the minutest facts, and the day and month and year in which they occurred. If this be all, we may well despise history, as only ministering to human vanity and ambition. On the contrary, nature herself has taught us order. The water is separated from earth, and air from both, and all the agents in nature operate with a system and regularity known only to the man of science. And everything in the animal world stands out before us already classified. And why should there not be a classification of the facts of history? We may distinguish between the causes which produce a system of error, and the moral effects of that system itself. The effect produced will be like the cause, it is true; but still that may not exhibit the whole effect in the case. If idolatry depend for its origin and its continuance on an appeal to the imagination and to the senses, as the principal special causes which produce it, we may safely conclude that, as the theory of its origin leaves man's conscience and his moral nature untouched, the effect will be,

not in his moral constitution, but on his imagination and senses. But still we must look deeper into the subject, if we wish fully to understand its influence on morals. And if we always find connected with it an extravagant influence ascribed to mere external acts, and if the painting or the sculpture can itself convey no idea as to the spiritual qualities of the object worshipped, at least in ordinary cases, we may conclude that the condition of men will not be improved by such a system.

In conducting these inquiries, however, there are certain extremes to be avoided ; and the same radical error lies at the bottom of them all, at least so far as church history is concerned. There is one class who hold to a gradual development of Christian truth ; that if the religious affections are right; they will lead to results in Christian doctrine and in church polity, which are not to be found in the primitive church, and which are nevertheless agreeable to the will of God. This whole system of the mysteries, with all others analogous to it, is to be rejected, because it does not acknowledge the absolute perfection and sufficiency of the inspired volume. Another extreme is that which leads men to look with reverence on the opinions and interpretations of the uninspired doctors of the church, as authoritatively settling vital questions. To this appeal to tradition, the same objection may be made ; the inspired word of truth, alone, has authority in matters of controversy. We will never consent to take as our standard the opinions of the teachers of the church, in any century, since the Apostles' days. This would indeed fix at once in stereotype all the opinions and rites and customs of the church ; and not only so, but the very process of argument by which opinions and interpretations are established. This is a Procrustean bed

on which we beg to be excused from lying. This is the great error of the Catholic, the effect of which is mental servility, and the removal of all stimulus to an intelligent and profitable study of history. To accomplish that which seems to have been in the mind of the Directors, when the plan of this Seminary was adopted, it is necessary that the adaptation of systems of doctrine to produce certain effects, should be proved; and then, that these results have always occurred in point of fact, must be proved from history.

In regard to the first, it must be made to appear that the effect ascribed to a given cause or combination of causes is not an incident, but that it flows naturally from it, as a stream from a fountain; that there is a peculiar adaptation in the doctrine or system of doctrine to produce the effect indicated, and that it is adapted to produce no other.

As to the second, the historical deductions must be made with great caution, and the student of history should be careful that he does not mistake his own prejudices for historical facts, a very common occurrence; or at least that his party feelings and his want of candor have not given a coloring to facts inconsistent with truth. The connection between the doctrine and the effect ascribed to it ought to be real, not imaginary. The different results at which we arrive by this process may be attended with various degrees of probability. In some cases the highest, and in others the lowest, degrees of probability will be reached. But this is only what occurs on every other subject of human investigation; in criticism, interpretation, metaphysics, and in morals, the mind is conscious of different degrees of conviction, the result either of its own weakness, or of a want of a clear and full exhibition of light and evidence. We propose now to give an illustration of what we have thus far attempted to explain and confirm.

We will suppose the object to be, to show the influence of some system of theological doctrine on civil and religious liberty, and that the system of the Puritans and of the Catholics is selected, the one as a specimen of a favorable, and the other as a specimen of an unfavorable, influence on human freedom. We will assume that the statements found in the ordinary histories on the subject we propose to discuss are true; and we presume that, if they are denied, they can be proved by the most unquestionable authority. But we do not wish to perplex ourselves or our audience with any such questions to-day. We intend to make our statements as fair as possible.

The first thing to be done is, to inquire into the nature of the doctrines taught by the respective parties in this case. The Puritans held to the right of private judgment, the right to examine for themselves, and decide on their own creed. They held that every man was personally responsible to God for not finding his own rule of faith in the Bible. They also held to the right of all the members of the community to think for themselves on all subjects, a right to which the meanest had an equal claim with the highest. Thus they formed the habit of mental independence, in opposition to that servility and mental dependence, on the other hand, of which we shall speak presently. The Puritans also were ardent patrons of learning, and of the general diffusion of knowledge; and thus they endeavored to educate the public mind to think and act for itself. In all the religious communities they organized, they gave the people a share in the government of the church. Nothing could be lawfully done, unless the people were present themselves, or by their representatives. Thus they taught, in the clearest manner, the representative principle, which is the basis of all free government. They also taught that all

the ministers had equal rights, as well as that all the people had a voice in their religious assemblies. They repudiated that system which disfranchised the people, and elevated the clergy to principalities, temporal or spiritual, and made the bishop a little monarch over his brethren, and erected a throne higher than the rest for him who claimed universal jurisdiction over the church. But, above all, the Puritans laid the foundation of their principles in the holy Scriptures. No one thing was more remarkable in their history than this reverence for God's word. Here they were taught to value justice between man and man, and to hate and punish oppression and violence. They studied the civil code of Moses, of which God was the author, and in which strict and equal justice in our intercourse with our fellow-men is always enjoined. Some of them may have misunderstood and misapplied some portion of the Old Testament, especially the historical parts ; but we now speak of the main body of this most wonderful race of men. No book ever written more clearly defines right and wrong than the Bible ; nor is any book to be found anywhere, in which the principles of human liberty are more clearly taught. This was the great statute-book of the Puritans, and they were as deeply imbued with its spirit as any people that ever lived. Time will not permit us to enlarge on this subject.

We now proceed to inquire, whether history confirms the views which we have just expressed. From the days of Queen Elizabeth the Puritans resisted the arbitrary acts of the sovereign, and the violent encroachments on the rights of the subject. Against the Star Chamber and High Commission they earnestly remonstrated, as a stretch of the royal prerogative, not warranted by the English constitution. When the Stuart family attempted to make the English government an

absolute monarchy, and to dispense with parliaments, and even with the laws of the land, except such as they might approve ; when they imprisoned and condemned freemen without due process of law ; when they resorted to forced loans and benevolences, and, in fact, undertook to tax the subject without consent of their representatives ; foremost in the opposition to such high-handed measures were found the Puritan leaders. Thus did this body of men, for near one hundred years, steadfastly resist and oppose the tyrannical measures of the Court, until at last a revolution, more permanent and beneficial in its effects than any ever effected in Great Britain since the days of Alfred the Great, was effected by the accession of William and Mary to the throne. The Puritans fought the battle for freedom during the long Parliament, during the days of Cromwell, and during the days of the licentious Charles II. The age of Cromwell is an era in English history. Never before did more able judges sit in the courts, nor was justice ever more impartially administered. Commerce with foreign countries flourished, and the English navy began to win those laurels which have since made her the mistress of the seas. In New England as well as old England, the Puritan character has shown itself to be deeply hostile to tyrants and tyranny. The only objection worthy of serious notice to these conclusions and statements is, that some of the Puritans were intolerant. The fact cannot be denied. It was, however, the error of the age in which they lived. They were the first in England to work out the problem as to religious toleration, and the first to act on it ; they have perseveringly adhered to it ever since.

We next proceed to show, that the Catholic system is not favorable to liberty. The exact opposite to this has been ingeniously and perseveringly maintained by one of the ablest

and most eloquent of the Roman Catholic bishops of this country ; and it is maintained by thousands of others.* The infallibility of the pope establishes the most despotic monarchy in the world ; for he speaks as God to men, and claims to be the vicegerent of heaven. The divine right of kings, and the legal fiction that the king can do no wrong, do not establish such an unlimited authority ; for the persons who admit these principles hold that a wrong may be done by the sovereign, though his official advisers are held responsible for it. But the claims of the pope are equal to a plenary inspiration. If it is believed that the infallibility in question is found in a general council, it is known that no such council has been held for three hundred years, even on the broadest theory of such councils. The clergy have usurped all the authority in the Catholic communion ; and no layman ever lifts his voice in any ecclesiastical court. And when appeals are made, they are not from one or two to many, so as to bring the collected wisdom of the whole body to bear on a difficult case, but they are from many to one. The church rulers, too, are a separate class, unconnected with the masses around them, by the ties of sympathy or interest ; but they are connected with the Bishop of Rome by the strongest motives of self-interest, and by the vows of canonical obedience. When we consider human nature as it is, we might well think it strange if they were not inflated to the point of insolence by their overgrown and absolute authority ; by the power they are supposed to possess of converting the bread and wine into the real body of Christ ; by their pretended priestly absolution, and by the *opus operatum* that accompanies all their official acts. And then the whole Catholic system is pre-eminently

* Bishop Hughes.

one of authority. No opinion, rite, or ceremony of the church is to be called into question. Submission to all acts, however oppressive, is required, under the pretence that the canon law so requires, or that the practice is justified by prescription, or by an infallible pope. Besides, the key that unlocks the treasures of knowledge is taken away from the people, and annually there is published, under the sanction of the pope, a catalogue of prohibited books, in which are included scientific works, if a Protestant is the author of them. It is no part of the principles of Catholicism that the schoolmaster should be abroad in the land ; and he is not abroad in Catholic countries. But, above all, the Bible is to the Catholic virtually a prohibited book, even in the unfaithful translation of a translation, itself in many points erroneous.* In short, the whole system is one of absolute mental servility on the part of the people ; and it uniformly checks and destroys mental independence.

We now proceed to inquire what have been the teachings of history on this subject. In the eighth century the popes became temporal princes in Italy, and for eleven centuries the region about Rome has acknowledged their spiritual and temporal authority. And what have been the results ? During all this long period religious intolerance has prevailed, and for the greater part of it the tribunal of the inquisition has been used to stop the mouths of heretics ; and the number of its victims, and the cruelties and deeds of darkness practised in its dungeons and rooms of torture, none can tell until the great day shall reveal it. And what has Italy become under the domination of the priesthood ? The land of the Catos, Ciceros, Scipios and Cæsars of other days is now a land of musicians, painters and sculptors, a land of monks and priests,

* The Catholic translations are from the Vulgate.

barefooted, squalid, lazy, ignorant, and vicious ; a land of robbers and assassins, of ragged lazaroni, of thriftlessness and indolence, in which the project to make a railroad is esteemed a crime against the state, which merits a thundering bull from the successor of St. Peter ; a land in which to preach a protestant sermon, or to distribute a protestant translation of the Bible, would be esteemed a crime equal to murder or grand larceny. And yet this is the country in which were built, by their pagan ancestors, the Appian Way, called the Queen of Roads, and others, as costly as the pavements in our cities, from the capital to various parts of the empire, at a distance of several hundred miles : the Coliseum, the amphitheatres, the obelisks now found, show to the sad and curious traveler, that Rome, as it now is, is only the tomb of its own former greatness ; and that to degrade herself as she has done, by her attention to frivolous and childish superstition, it was necessary that she should unlearn all her former grandeur and greatness ; that she should renounce and nullify the best civil code, and the purest civil government to be found on earth. Rome is no longer the land of heroes, of statesmen and orators ; it is no longer a land of equal laws. Some have attempted to prove that the population of the single city of Rome, in the day of her ancient glory, equalled that of the whole of Italy at the present day. From the age of Leo the Great, at the middle of the fifth century, the popes of Rome aimed to establish a universal spiritual despotism over the whole of Christendom ; and when this end seemed to be accomplished, at least as far as the west was concerned, then, from the period of Gregory VII., 1073, to the Reformation, they strove unceasingly to build up their authority over temporal sovereigns, and they gave away crowns and kingdoms to whomsoever they wished. It was a pope of Rome (Innocent

III.) who deposed king John, and who annulled the great charter which contains the germ of English freedom, and excommunicated the barons who drew it up and required the sovereign to sign it.

It is known that the advisers of the most arbitrary measures of European sovereigns have been the Catholic priests, who have gotten the ear of the monarch, and have become the keepers of his conscience. The reign of the bloody Mary may safely be contrasted with that of her sister, or of any protestant king or queen of England. In France, infidelity itself removed from the statute-book the laws proscribing and persecuting the Protestants. Thus we think we have made it evident, that the tendencies of Romanism are not in the direction of human freedom. We will not deny that there may be exceptions, as to the operation of the principles we have mentioned, in both the classes described. We have only ~~sought~~ ^{aimed} to generalize. Nor would we deny that there are others, besides the Puritans, who have exerted a happy influence in favor of civil and religious liberty. This we would most willingly admit, or rather most earnestly maintain. The principle which lies at the basis of a profitable study of church history might be further illustrated, by a reference to the Oriental philosophy, to Arianism, to the rise, tendencies, and effects of monasticism. For example, it might be proved that there was a tendency to the ascetic life, especially in the East, previous to the advent of Christ, and after his advent, independent of the teachings of Christianity; that it appeared among the Jews in the Therapeutæ and Essenes; among the pagans in the celibacy practised in some instances by the priests, and from the fact that many of them professed to lead a contemplative and ascetic life. The philosophy of that age, too, led to asceticism. The tendencies of gnosticism are

known to all ; nor is it less obvious that a similar tendency was found in the Cynics, and other sects of philosophers. The opposition between paganism and Christianity led some minds to the unsocial extreme of monasticism ; nor were persecutions, and the contempt in which Christians were held in early ages, without their influence. The laxity of morals among professed Christians may have had an indirect influence in stimulating some, whose minds were misled by these erroneous pre-existing views of religion, to retire from human society, that they might attain to a higher standard of piety than seemed to them attainable amidst the temptations and pollutions of the populous cities.

As to the effects of this system, we might show that, in its earliest development, when the views of the anchorites prevailed, its tendency was to inhumanize men, to lead to mental derangement and suicide, many examples of which could be produced from history ; and that after men, who professed to renounce the world, lived not in solitary cells, but in societies regulated by rules, it tended to lower the standard of morals and religion among the people, by exhibiting what professed to be a higher spirituality than that attainable by the mass of Christians ; that it led to, if it did not originate from, ideas of human merit ; that it placed true piety in the sensuous and external, instead of placing it in the spiritual and internal ; that a religion, which consisted so much in abstinence, fasting, vigils, and bodily inflictions, must, in the end, degrade Christianity from its high position, as a religion intended to govern the inner man, and outer man through the inner. We might also show that it fostered hypocrisy, and contributed its full share in separating a class of men from their relations to and sympathy with society around them, and to create a caste in religion ; and that men would at last

break away from all rules, and become licentious and indolent ; and finally, that it cherished self-righteousness and spiritual pride. The system is therefore unfavorable to spiritual piety and to good morals. The question will most naturally arise here, "Whether anything has been done in this department of history which the plan of our seminary makes it the duty of the professor to occupy?" We answer, that in civil history much has been done. Schlegel, Hallam, Guizot, Arnold, and Smith, have all done something to throw light on this aspect of history ; and it is remarkable, that four of the five books just mentioned formed originally a course of public lectures ; one delivered in Germany, another in the University of Paris, a third in the University of Oxford, and the last in the University of Cambridge. History is now studied with an ardor which has no parallel in past ages ; and in our own country it is receiving increasing attention in our literary institutions. For the department of ecclesiastical history not so much has as yet been done as for civil history.

For eighteen hundred years Christianity has exerted great influence on the state ; it has formed the public morals ; it has controlled the education of the European world ; it has often been brought into conflict with false theories of morals, and has been persecuted by the state : and on all these accounts it has attracted the notice of the historians of the nations. It may therefore be expected, that in the general histories, and especially in the scholastic works on history lately issued from the press, something valuable to the student of church history will be found. Accordingly, all the books which we have mentioned may be read with profit. Some of them discuss questions of this nature with great ability.

But this field has not been left without cultivation by those who have professed to write on the history of the church.

We say nothing of those who have treated, in an able and instructive manner, certain portions of history, such as the crusades, and the rise of popery, together with its grand results. There is scarcely a valuable history of the church which does not more or less discuss some of the questions which appear to have been contemplated in the plan of this institution. In Robertson's history of Charles V. there are many acute and philosophical remarks, which show a mind awake to the true object of history. Gieseler's Text-Book of Ecclesiastical History proves that the author is a profound scholar, and capable of taking an instructive view of history ; but his work is very concise, and he has allowed himself little time for discussing, in an interesting manner, many questions, for the discussion of which he is well qualified. Indeed, his aim seems to have been, to give the results of his own investigations, rather than the process by which he arrived at them. But, of all the church histories of modern times, Neander's, now in a course of publication, is most thoroughly imbued with a philosophical spirit. With learning and scholarship of the highest order, he unites logical acumen, and sound judgment, and earnest piety. Still, we need a work which will embody the results of investigation on this subject ; a work which supposes the student to be possessed of the facts of history, but which reasons from them, and about them, in such a manner as shall be instructive. The German stand-point is one thing, and the American is another. There are some discussions suited to the aspect of things in Europe, and some to the aspect of things in this country. It is a desideratum, then, that the results of past investigation should be embodied in some convenient form ; and that what Guizot, and Arnold, and Smyth have attempted to do for civil history, should be done for church history. Thus have we endeavored to give our views,

and what has seemed to us the views of those who originated and govern this institution, on the important subject of church history. Whether we have succeeded or not, it is for others to judge; but if any one can show us a better way, or throw light on this subject, we hope we shall thankfully receive his aid, and profit by his instructions.

ADDRESS OF DR. SAMPSON.

Respected Fathers and Brethren, and Auditors generally.—

THE great enemy of truth, of Christ, and of souls, has long been at work. His hate and his skill have only increased with his age and experience.

When Christianity was first set up, Satan held the world fast bound in paganism. It had been so for many long ages of darkness,—ages of ignorance, and superstition, and sin. To this huge system, the great facts and the simple and sublime doctrines of Revelation, too deep for the discoveries of natural reason, had to be opposed. With the Bible in hand and a sound reason at command, aided by the mighty power of the Holy Ghost, it devolved upon the *Christian Philosopher* to sustain the conflict for the interests of souls, and of Christ's kingdom. Satan was unequal to the contest; paganism fell, and Christianity triumphed.

The great enemy next entered the Christian camp. Unable to oppose paganism to Christianity, he determined to baptize it with Christian baptism. He endeavored to smother the Church with idolatry, and brought in formality like a flood. Under the guise of piety, he set up in the Church, in the name of Jesus Christ, a vicar for himself, and found a human and formal substitute for every divine doctrine and for every Christian virtue. He took away from the people the word of God, and gave, in its place, the decrees of coun-

cils and of popes ; he destroyed the spirit and simplicity of Christian worship, and substituted the more imposing but lifeless ceremonies of man's invention in their stead. He seemed to have gained the victory. But the *reformers*, like good soldiers of Jesus Christ, with the word of God, which is the sword of the Spirit, burst his bands, gave him battle, and broke his power. Truë, spiritual Christianity, almost dead, revived and flourished.

Satan saw himself foiled, and again resolved to marshal his forces from without. Free from the shackles of blind devotion and ignorant superstition, it was easy to run men into the opposite extreme of infidelity. The wily skeptic and bold blasphemer thought to reason or shame religion from the earth. The God of retributive justice was mocked. His word a forgery ; His ministers deceivers ; and His people hypocrites. Revelation was a dream, and reason was God. *Christian logicians*, mighty men of God, and mighty in the Scriptures, joined issue, and the enemy was defeated. Infidelity ran mad, and Christianity prevailed.

But the arch enemy, though cast down, was not destroyed. His next stratagem was a master-stroke. In the dark ages, paganism had served his purpose well : in an age of light, he saw the need of something more subtle. Paganism had fallen when opposed to the Church, but had well nigh prevailed, when embraced in her bosom ; so infidelity, though defeated without, yet when intrenched within her pale, might prove her ruin. He baptized paganism then ; now he resolves to baptize infidelity : The great agents by whom he would vex and destroy the church, are infidel theologians and commentators on the Scriptures. In the former case he took away the Word of God : now he would mangle and pervert it. The worst enemies of the truth and of the

church, are professed friends within her own pale ;—theological professors and preachers, at heart infidels, doing what they can to undermine the foundations of faith,—to unsettle the canon of Scripture and the interpretation thereof. The *critical interpreter* of the Scriptures, therefore, under the great Head of the Church, who has always given the victory, must sustain the brunt of ~~this~~ present conflict.

Called to take part in this institution, in the very responsible work of instructing in the Word of God those who are themselves to be teachers in the Church ; with that word before me as my daily text-book, and the end of my labors to ascertain what holy men of old wrote as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, and what the Spirit of Christ, which was in them, did signify by what they wrote,—I have thought these remarks not inappropriate, as showing that I would desire to magnify my office. And however the sense of my own deficiency may thereby press the more heavily upon me, I have deemed it not unsuitable to the occasion, to discuss briefly (as the time demands) *the proper qualifications of the critical interpreter of the Sacred Scriptures*. In pursuance of this subject,—

I. The first qualification which I shall mention is, *that he have a thorough conviction that the Scriptures are indeed the Word of God*: in other words, that he be a firm believer in the plenary inspiration of the Sacred Scriptures.

By this I do not mean that it is to be maintained that every word of the text is now just what it was, as the text came from the hands of inspired prophets and apostles ; but that the text, as it came from them originally, contained the very matter, and in the very words which God designed to constitute the Revelation, and rule of our faith and duty. We may, indeed, admit different kinds or degrees of in-

spiration ; but, impossible as it is to determine, in any particular case, what degree of supernatural aid and control may have been needed to lead the writer to record just what he did, and in the very words that he did, and to guard him against all error, either of doctrine or of fact, we must hold firmly to the result that, in every case, such supernatural aid and control was vouchsafed, as was requisite to secure against error, and to make the Revelation, both as to matter and form, just what God designed it to be ; and that, since its completion, no such corruption has crept into the text, as to invalidate its claim to be an authentic and, of course, authoritative revelation of God's will to man.

We know, indeed, that since the sacred Scriptures were written, through the unavoidable casualties of transmission by frequent transcription, manifold trifling variations and discrepancies are to be found in the documents which furnish us the text. But, making full allowance for these, no man acquainted with the subject will, at this day, dare affirm, that the text has by this means so far lost its original purity as to invalidate, in the slightest degree, the authority which originally pertained to its teachings. To question the original integrity of the text, would be to suppose that God would give to man a rule of faith and practice, originally imperfect and faulty ; that here there was a departure from what was true in regard to all else that came from his hands,—“Behold it was very good !” It is, indeed, sometimes said, that since God has not seen fit, by a perpetual miracle, to preserve the original text free from all corruption, accidental or designed, we cannot assert, that in ^{its} this original composition he preserved the writers of the sacred Scriptures absolutely free from all error. But, to say nothing of the claims of the sacred writers themselves, it violates our natural ideas of the

perfections of God to say, that he would inspire men at all to write a revelation, and yet leave them liable to write down errors or untruths for our instruction. It is consistent with the perfections of God to form the fair fabric of the world, and create perfect moral creatures to occupy and enjoy it ; and yet, to allow these rational and moral creatures to sin, and incapacitate themselves for such occupation and enjoyment. But it would be utterly inconsistent with his perfections, to create a world originally marred with deformities and disorders, and still more to people it with rational and moral creatures, corrupt and perverted in their rational and moral natures. If God create a moral being at all, he must, by the very necessity or law of his own holy, wise, and benevolent character, create him a holy and happy being, free from all taint or corruption, perfect in his kind. And so in regard to a revelation. He may devolve on man the responsibility of its preservation, or he may withhold one altogether. But if, in divine compassion, he condescend to give one to man for his instruction and guidance, he must give him one comporting, in all respects, with the perfections of its glorious Author, and adapted to meet the wants, and command the confidence, of him for whom it was intended.

These conditions are by no means fulfilled, if we hold merely to the *substance* of the Scriptures as inspired of God, while we admit that the words, either through lack of original inspiration, or through careless and irreverent transmission, are without authority. The substance of the Scriptures is contained in their words ; except by the latter we had not known the former ; and we receive the substance because we believe the words which contain it came from God. Destroy reverence for the authority of the text, and you soon destroy all due regard for the authority of the matter. Admit that

the text was originally mixed with error ; that the writers were sometimes so far left to themselves that they recorded what was not true ; or that, since the Scriptures were written, corruption has come in to such an extent as to affect the doctrines and duties inculcated, or to invalidate the proper integrity of the text ; and we not only admit a derogation from the Scriptures, which is incapable of proof, and opposed by many valid arguments, but we at once allow a liberty which man has never yet known how to use. Where inspiration stands, and where inspiration fails ; in other words, where we have the teaching of God, and where the teaching of man ; or, stronger still, where we have truth, and where we have falsehood, we can have no certain means of ascertaining. Every man must be allowed to separate for himself ; and the prevailing rule will be, to receive that as from God which is agreeable to human philosophy and caprice, and to reject all which conflicts with them. Nothing short of inspiration itself could make the proper separation.

It may not be said that, inasmuch as the text, as we now have it, is, by admission, in manifold, though generally exceedingly trivial instances, corrupt, *therefore* the very liberty which we fear to allow has to be continually exercised. There is a wide difference between the stand-point of the mind which holds, in any particular case of various readings, the surrounding text to be all firm, and, from amongst the various readings, endeavors to select that which, like it, proceeded from the pen of inspiration, and that of the mind which is altogether at sea as to the metes and bounds of surrounding inspiration, and which feels at liberty to question the inspiration of the whole. In the one case, we are endeavoring to restore to inspiration what the want of it has lost or taken away ; in the other, we question whether there be any

inspiration, and, if there be, where it is. In the one case, we hold to the body, and seek to restore a lost or wounded member, however small ; in the other, we not only question which is the proper member, but we doubt if there be any body at all.

The belief of the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures, in the sense which I have defined, is necessary, to inspire the interpreter with a proper regard for the word of God as such ; to restrain him from handling it deceitfully, or with presumption and lightness ; to stimulate to due diligence and care, and dependence on God in eliciting the true meaning of its words ; and to induce a ready submission to its authoritative teachings.

On this important subject, the history of Biblical interpretation in modern Germany furnishes most instructive lessons. Here we have the disastrous effects of the rejection of the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures exhibited on a scale which is appalling to the devout mind. We know, indeed, that the great apostacy in Germany began in the heart. The long barren discussions which succeeded the reformation terminated, in the eighteenth century, in the utter prostration of vital piety. But the first outward demonstrations were against the authority of the sacred Scriptures, against the canon and the text. The discussions of the previous century had disclosed the fact, that the Scripture text had been subjected to the same casualties of transmission as the text of other books. But when further investigation had demonstrated that the changes which had crept in from this source could never invalidate its claims as an authentic text, it only remained to question the authority of its teachings ; and this could be done only by denying its plenary inspiration. This done, and philosophy had full sweep, and boldly asserted her

assumed prerogatives. Miracles and prophecies were pronounced to be impossible things ; and of course full liberty was felt to explain away the account of them in the Scriptures. The former were put on the same level as Grecian and Roman myths ; the latter were mere shrewd conjectures of near events, or histories *post eventum*, or dim and uncertain visions of the remote future. The wildest and most forced interpretations were put upon words, in order to sustain foregone conclusions of philosophy and science, falsely so called : and when the plain grammatical interpretation forced out the true meaning, that meaning ceased to be binding, because not inspired of God, and not equal to the present advanced state of human thought and human inquiry.

It need scarcely be added, that the ground occupied by such interpreters is essentially infidel. From them we are not to expect fair dealing with the text, or reverential expositions of its meaning. And yet it seems not to be understood by some, that there is no firm middle ground between the opinions of those who regard the very words of the Scriptures as originally sanctioned, ^{were} not dictated by the Spirit, and consequently free from all errors, and of those who regard the whole as of human origin, and consequently from the beginning more or less mixed with error. The Bible is of God, or of man ; all of God, or all of man ; consequently all authoritative as from God, or none demonstrably so. A mixed revelation (so to call it) would, as we have already intimated, require another purely divine one to enable us to determine what in the former was from God, and what from man.

II. The next essential qualification of the interpreter of the sacred Scriptures which I shall mention is, *that he be truly enlightened and regenerated by the Spirit which gave them.*

The necessity for this qualification lies in the deep-rooted

depravity of the human heart, and its consequent natural insensibility and aversion to the spiritual truths of the sacred Scriptures. All history testifies to this enmity of the heart to the truth of God. Unsanctified minds seldom treat of the word of God, except to pervert or to ridicule it. "The natural man," say the Scriptures themselves, "receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him ; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

It is not to be expected, or believed, that a man, who is prejudiced at heart against any system of truths, shall be able fully to understand them, or fairly to expound them. Still less can this be expected in the present case, where the truths are of such a character as to aim directly at the correction of the whole man. Pride of intellect, as well as of heart, must be subdued ; wicked passions must be restrained and mortified ; and the whole current of feeling, and thought, and action run in a direction which has no congeniality with the selfish and carnal desires of the natural heart. Where such is the conflict between the interpreter and the sacred writings which he undertakes to expound, there must often be gross misconceptions, as well as gross perversions, of their meaning. The temptations to this may even be all the stronger, according to the respect which the interpreter has for the binding authority of the Scriptures. The necessity of an adjustment of the conflict is felt to be the more urgent ; and it is far easier for corrupt and blinded man to relinquish and pervert the truth, than it is for him to give up his own views, and principles, and practices. In such a case, error has greatly the advantage over the truth. The whole strength of our natural opposition to the truth is enlisted on its side ; and precisely because the Scriptures are acknowledged to be

an authoritative rule, the desire is felt so to expound the rule as to make it easy and acceptable to unhumbled reason and unsanctified affections. Where lower views are entertained of the binding authority of the Scriptures, the interpreter may feel no such strong temptation wilfully to pervert their meaning. He may feel free to exhibit the doctrines, and duties, and facts of the Scriptures, and yet be equally free to maintain his own views and practices. Still, in either case, the interpreter's subjective incapacity for the truth, his natural want of spiritual apprehension of it as light and life to the soul, must often exclude correct and luminous views, and spread darkness over the sacred page.

The exposition of the Scriptures, therefore, is safe and edifying only in the hands of him who, to a profound reverence for their divine authority, unites a heart and understanding in unison, by virtue of the operations of the Spirit, with the spiritual truths which they inculcate. In him only is found the spiritual discernment and love for the truth which places the mind in the proper attitude for the right apprehension and exhibition of it.

Here again Germany furnishes instructive lessons for our admonition. It was the decline of piety, as we have already stated, which prepared the way for those loose views of the authority of the sacred Scriptures which have, in that country, been so destructive of a correct and reverential treatment of them. The men there, and their followers in other countries, who deny the possibility of miracles and prophecies, and who treat the word of God scarcely as they would the word of man, are not the men, whatever may be their private amiability and worth, who set the highest value on the power of inward godliness and outward piety, and who do the most to promote them; and when this power of an inward life, gene-

rated by the Spirit of God, has taken possession of the heart, it has been followed generally by a more or less total renunciation of former philosophical difficulties. We have, indeed, in entire accordance with what we have already said, some quite remarkable instances of expositorial tact in minds of skeptical views and of doubtful piety. But even the best of such commentators do much to unsettle the foundations, and do little for the advancement, of true religion. Happily the course of theological controversy and scriptural exposition in that *distracted* country gives us much hope that the victory will ultimately decide for those who have hid the word of God most deeply in their hearts, and who bow with most reverence and obedience to its authoritative teachings.

III. The third qualification, which I mention as essential to the critical interpreter of the Scriptures, is *a thorough knowledge of the original languages in which they are written, as well as a good knowledge, at least, of their cognates.*

It is well known that the original languages of the Scriptures are the Hebrew, Chaldee, and Greek ; and that these are properly now all dead languages. The immediate cognates of these, a knowledge of which may be regarded as indispensable to the accomplished interpreter of the Scriptures, are Arabic, Syriac, and Ethiopic for the first two, and the Latin for the last.

That a thorough knowledge of the original languages of the sacred Scriptures is absolutely necessary to the interpreter, will hardly be denied at the present day, by any one who is competent to judge. All allow that our best translations are imperfect ; and were these as perfect as they could be made, it would, in a multitude of cases, be impossible for the student of these merely to investigate the possible interpreta-

tions of the original, or to ascertain the full meaning of the true one. The truth is, that whilst the great doctrines and duties taught in the Scriptures are taught in a variety of form and connection, which ought to leave no dispute as to what they are ; yet, in respect to the doctrines, at least, saving a few—happily the most fundamental—there is, amongst Christian interpreters and theologians, a wide diversity ; and in the minuter details of interpretation, particularly, there is a diversity, and often a contrariety, which is to be ascribed, not merely to dogmatic prejudices and to deficient knowledge in general, but especially to a defective knowledge of the original languages of the Scriptures. Whoever considers the ease and certainty with which we understand those who speak and write our own vernacular tongue, must be sensible of what we lose in the interpretation of the Scriptures, by the want of a thorough acquaintance with the languages in which they are written. We make full allowance for the influence of dogmatic prejudices, where these may operate, for the embarrassments of an imperfect knowledge of antiquity generally, and for the imperfection and ambiguity of language, even when best known and correctly written : and yet we hesitate not to say, that the diversities that we meet with in the minutiae of interpretation are such and so numerous, as to prove incontestibly that the prolific source from which they spring is the want of a thorough acquaintance with the original languages themselves ; such an acquaintance as those who thought and spake in them possessed. It is the want of easy familiarity with the original language of the Scriptures, indeed, which has always constituted the greatest difficulty in the way of interpreters, and has most powerfully tempted to the easier and more seductive methods of allegorizing, so common

with the fathers, and catenating and compiling, so much practised by their successors down to the present day.

In order to this thorough acquaintance with the original languages of the Scriptures, so indispensable, it is all-important to the interpreter, that he be well acquainted with their nearer cognates. In these he finds the usage which so often fails him, by reason of insufficient remains, in the case of the Hebrew especially ; and the most useful helps for the interpretation of both the Old Testament and the New. It is only by the diligent study of all these, both the original and the cognate languages of the Scriptures, that the interpreter can so appropriate and appreciate the forms of thought, the idiom, force, and spirit of the sacred writers, as to feel independent and at home in his work. I may be allowed to introduce here, the testimony of a veteran in oriental literature, taken from the preface of the latest edition of his famous Hebrew Grammar. “ There are two ways,” says he “ to pursue the Hebrew. The one is to consult the Hebrew Grammars and Lexicons that are at hand ; by way of supererogation to spell a little Arabic and Syriac ; to take in hand some other helps that lie in a couple of bye-ways ; to compare a half or a whole dozen of commentaries ; and then believe that one understands Hebrew, and can, as a learned man, expose the true sense of the Old Testament. This attractive way have thousands marched, and never will it cease to be the most admired ; but upon what sandbanks and cliffs it conducts, we should at last universally perceive. The other is first to lay the Hebrew entirely aside, and, with true toil and devotion, appropriate a hundred talents, in regions which lie quite far from the Old Testament, and which, in Germany, yield no bread ; for example, become in all Shemitic literature first perfectly at

home, and then perhaps return again to the old Hebrew, in order to recall it for ourselves, piece by piece, from death to life, and so apprehend what it really says to us and teaches us." This extract, certainly savors of Germany; more than is here meant is indispensable to the devout and successful interpreter: but what piety and a sacred regard for the authority of the text can do and will do without the knowledge of the original languages of the Scriptures, we may learn from the almost universal allegorizing of the fathers and dogmatism of the dark ages, and from the many commentators of later times, who have done little more than collect and digest the statements and criticisms of others who have preceded them, and sometimes have done this in a very superficial and unscholarlike way.

The qualification of which I am speaking is so obvious and so generally admitted, that I deem it unnecessary to enlarge. I must add, however, before dismissing it, that the church has need at the present day of Scripture interpreters, who possess this knowledge of the original languages, and of the helps to the right understanding of them, in a very high degree. Never was this department of sacred literature more sedulously and more successfully cultivated; and never were the fruits of lingual investigations applied with more zeal to the unsettling of the canon and perverting the meaning of the Scriptures. Their authority is attacked with an array of erudition and learned authority, that must confound the simple; and to be maintained, they call for men of at least equal and less sophisticated lore.

IV. But not only is a thorough knowledge of the original and cognate languages of the Scriptures necessary to the interpreter; he has need, in the fourth place, of *a very extensive and often minute acquaintance with various collateral knowledge.*

There is no department of real knowledge that does not help to the better understanding and illustration of the Scriptures. There are expressions in them which have for ages been misunderstood, or correctly apprehended only since the clear discoveries of modern science. It is, to give a simple example, familiar to every reader of the Scriptures that the rising and setting of the sun, so frequently mentioned in them, are, as in our own language, only a conformity to the ordinary usages of language, to express an ordinary phenomenon as it appears in nature, without teaching anything as to the real manner of its occurrence, although they may at first have originated in conceptions of a mode conformed to the appearance.

But far more important than all modern science, strictly so called, to the right interpretation of the Scriptures, is a good knowledge of history and an intimate and correct knowledge of antiquity. The Scriptures contain a long succession of revelations and records, made originally for the benefit of a particular chosen people, but intended ultimately for the benefit of all the nations of the earth. They contain throughout innumerable allusions to the geographical, historical, political, social, moral, philosophical, and religious relations of the chosen people, and the country which they inhabited, as well as of all the surrounding nations and countries with which they were in various ways connected. Here a wide field is thrown open for the biblical student; and many rich results have been afforded by the diligent researches of modern inquirers. The more our knowledge advances of Jewish, Roman, Grecian, Egyptian,—indeed, ancient and oriental antiquities generally, the more thoroughly are the Scriptures understood in all their varied and multiplied allusions; and their coincidence with

ancient facts and relations, thus ascertained from other sources, constitutes an increasingly powerful and conclusive argument for their genuineness and authenticity. Difficulties, indeed, which, in some cases, seemed to be glaring discrepancies, and constituted for the infidel strong objections to the credibility, and of course to the genuineness and inspiration of the Scriptures, or of particular parts thereof, have been completely solved, and added to the general mass of archæological coincidences which serve so triumphantly to maintain and verify the inspired record.

We are far from believing that this source of knowledge for the confirmation and better understanding of the Scriptures is completely exhausted. We believe, on the contrary, that the most valuable results are to flow from the persevering and thorough investigation of the original languages of the Scriptures, and the antiquities with which they stand connected. The facilities and inducements to such investigations were never greater than at the present time, nor the promise greater to religion and science.

The Bible challenges investigation. It professes to give knowledge which shall make men wise unto salvation, and demands to be studied and understood. It courts the light, and never avoids it. It stimulates to mental activity, and never stifles lawful inquiry. It shines brightest in the midst of surrounding light, and has always gained by every advance in real knowledge. It claims science as its handmaid, and wages eternal war upon all darkness in the soul. We doubt not that, in the end, all real knowledge and all true science will pay it due homage and render it good service. It is a striking and significant fact, that while the boasted theories and alleged discoveries of modern science are boldly set up as conflicting with the Scriptures, the facts of antiquity that are

almost daily brought to light are clearly demonstrating their truth and illustrating their meaning. It is precisely the newest of the sciences which, like untutored children, show the most undevout hostility to the Scriptures ; the more established our knowledge, the more it accords with and confirms them. The whole past history of the progress of true science authorizes the unwavering belief, that the more thorough and accurate our knowledge is of all things, ancient and modern, the more clearly will the truth of the sacred Scriptures appear, and the more accurately and thoroughly will they be understood and appreciated. At a day like this, when infidels in disguise are doing all to subvert and pervert the Scriptures, the critical interpreter may not neglect any of their defences, but should give diligent heed to them all.

V. The next requisite to the interpreter of the sacred Scriptures which I shall mention is, *a thorough and comprehensive acquaintance with the Scriptures themselves.*

Scripture truths are not given systematically. They were not written by one man in one age, but by many men during a long succession of ages. The facts, doctrines, and duties which they contain are taught in almost every variety of form and connection. But the writers, however diverse or widely separated in time and space, were animated and directed by one and the same unerring Spirit. They were the inspired religious teachers and rulers of the ages in which they lived, who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, and taught the truth in the measure and forms in which it was communicated to them. The revelation at any given period of its progress, though not yet finished, possessed a certain completeness. At every period it might be said, “The law of the Lord is perfect, converting (or restoring) the soul.” The seeds of the whole system, so to speak, were there ; the first and great

germs of saving truth were clearly discernible ; and in every age the humble believer knew enough for the life of his soul. The word as it then existed was suited to his wants. The very first *part*, that which Moses wrote, contained the history of facts which were fundamental in their character, and above all the philosophy of the ancients ; and, besides the moral law, numerous significant types which shadowed forth good things to come, and many exceeding great and precious promises and prophecies, which addressed themselves to the faith, and attracted the study and meditation, of all the devout worshippers of Jehovah. It was precisely because this perfection characterized the Scriptures at every period, that, far up on the stream of revelation, we hear their praises chanted in the most enraptured strains : and Old Testament saints, in respect to zeal and love for the word of God, lose nothing by comparison with the New.

It follows from these remarks that the Scriptures, as we have them, constitute a complete and finished whole ; and that every part, as it derives light from all the remaining parts, in its turn sheds light upon them. There is throughout a harmony and unity of design which can only be discerned and felt by him who thoroughly studies the whole ; which unity and harmony undiscerned and unfelt by the interpreter, he can scarcely fail not only to misunderstand, but to do violence to, holy writ. What sad havoc has been made, in modern Germany, of the Old Testament types and prophecies, by severing the two grand divisions of the Scriptures, and interpreting them separately, as though they were not indited and composed by one and the same Spirit, is known to all who have attended at all to the course of scripture interpretation. Like disastrous results attend the separation of one book from another, and interpreting each part as

though it sustained no common relation to all the rest. This mischievous error is most injurious in the hands of those who, like too many interpreters of the present day, entertain low views of the inspiration of the sacred writers. To them, indeed, it ought to be confined. Those who regard the Scriptures as proceeding from men who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, must, if they will be consistent, interpret every part of the whole volume by the light of all the rest. So we interpret the product of any other, though it be but a man's spirit : how much more, when we believe that we are interpreting words given or sanctioned by the infallible Spirit of God, the spirit of light and the spirit of truth ?

The truth is, that the Old and New Testaments are the counterparts and complements of each other. We may compare them to the morning dawn and to the splendor of mid-day. The morning dawns and the mid-day shines, only because of the approach and the presence of the great monarch of light. And as we would catch his earliest rays, if we would bear the heat and brightness of his meridian glory ; so if we would fully comprehend the sublime and saving light of the New Testament, we should come to it through the obscure~~X~~ dawn of the Old. Either shines at all only because of the approach or the presence of the great Sun of Righteousness. The light which they shed is one and the same, only differing in degree. They come from the same source, and they direct to the same end. It is ever the same Spirit speaking in them ; and whether the subject-matter be history, or type, or precept, or promise, or prophecy, whatever it be, the great object of the Spirit speaking in the Old Testament is, to meet the spiritual necessities of *that* generation of the covenant people of God, and *chiefly* by pointing them to, and preparing them for, the coming and redemption of the great

Son of God and man, so clearly set forth in the New Testament. The necessities of God's people in every age are essentially the same ; the great remedial system the same ; the experience of his people and the principles of his providential dealings with them the same. Where such is the unity of design and harmony in the subject-matter of revelation, it must needs be that all the parts stand intimately and mutually related, and confirm and illustrate one another. He best understands the Old Testament, who has learned the New aright ; and he best interprets the New, who has most thoroughly studied the institutions and weighed the very expressions of the Old. So true is this, that we may say, had the New Testament never existed, the Old had remained an unintelligible enigma ; and had the Old Testament never existed, the world had scarcely furnished the language that could have accurately and certainly conveyed the glorious revelations of the New. The interpreter therefore needs not only an acquaintance with the general scope of the sacred volume, but a minute acquaintance with the whole Scriptures ; so that in the consideration of any passage or phrase that needs elucidation, he may be able at once to collect the light that streams from various other parts of the harmonious whole.

VI. The last qualification of the interpreter of the sacred Scriptures which I shall mention, is, *that he possess correct principles of interpretation, and have the skill and judgment to apply them.*

The proper object of all language is to express the operations of the mind. Whether used by God or man, it is intended to communicate to others his thoughts and feelings and will ; and of course is properly designed to be understood. For this end it is obviously necessary, that, as

far as possible, it be used in the ordinary acceptance of its words and phrases. No system of ~~acceptation~~^{interpretation} therefore can, in general, be just, which does not aim to get at the meaning which the words fairly and legitimately convey, when construed according to the ordinary usages of language.

These general remarks apply in full force to the Scriptures. They are professedly a revelation of the will of God to man. As such, they were intended not only for the learned, but for the common people. They demand no recondite system of rules, known only to the initiated, in order to be understood ; their object is to make men, learned and unlearned, wise unto salvation, by communicating the saving truths of God, so that all who will may understand. For the accomplishment of this object, they must conform to the ordinary and legitimate usages of language. A revelation in unintelligible language is, in this regard, no revelation at all ; and language is never surer to be misunderstood, or not understood at all, than when it is employed contrary to its established meaning and laws. Such a revelation, to be understood, must carefully reveal the method of its right interpretation.

The Scriptures contain for themselves no such peculiar or special method of interpretation. They demand to be searched ; but by the help of no special light, save that of the Great Spirit of truth. They do, indeed, teach us that there are types, and parables, and prophecies, and, as I believe, cases of *double sense* ; but we contend, that here there is no violation of the nature or the legitimate use of language, so long as we follow the sure guidance of Revelation itself, and proceed not arbitrarily in the interpretation. We have already contended that the Scriptures are a complete whole, and that one part is to be interpreted by the help of the rest ; this common-sense rule we apply in the interpreta-

tion of all other instruments. What we further contend for here is, that allowing whatever may be fairly due to the nature of inspiration, and to the nature of the subject of the revelation, we must adhere to the principle, that the language employed teaches us, respecting that subject, whether past, present, or future, whether common or miraculous, above us or below us, and whether in figurative, typical, parabolic, or allegorical form, what, when interpreted by the ordinary laws and usages of language, it naturally and plainly means. It is in this sense that I would understand the famous maxim of the judicious Hooker :—“ I hold for a most infallible rule in expositions of sacred Scriptures, that, where a literal construction will stand, the furthest from the letter is commonly the worst.”

What is commonly known, therefore, as the historicogrammatical system of interpretation is, we believe, the only just system, always allowing what the very nature of a revelation from God and the subject of which it speaks may fairly demand. In this last qualification, we only allow what, in strict accordance with the true nature of language, is allowed to all writings,—that they be interpreted according to themselves and according to the nature of the subjects of which they treat.

Every period of the church has furnished abundant illustrations of the prime importance of the possession of correct principles of interpretation, by those who undertake to expound the Scriptures. Before the reformation, first the allegorical, and then the dogmatical, prevailed. Since that period, a purer and more fruitful method of investigation has been vigorously prosecuted ; but often upon principles contrary to all sound and rational criticism, however pretending to both characteristics, and, of course, derogatory to

the true dignity of the Scriptures as a revelation from God, and subversive of their true meaning. It is a common fault of all these systems, that they exalt the human and depress the divine. The dogmas of the church, the prolific fancies of exuberant minds, the prejudgments of human reason, the dicta of human philosophy, the analogies of false religions and heathen mythologies, and the pretensions of modern science, have all prevailed to pervert the Scriptures, and to add to and subtract from them. It is thus, that even in protestant churches, since the reformation, we have had interpreters, who could expound the sacred Scriptures, manifestly controlled by the church symbols which they had embraced ; who could see in the histories and prophecies of the Scriptures types and *adumbrations* of all the great political and ecclesiastical events of subsequent times ; who could treat as trivial all that was not, in the judgment of reason, directly conducive to the moral amendment of mankind ; who could add to the sacred narratives, or take from them, so much as was necessary to make them credible to their philosophy or conformable with it ; who could explain the doctrines of Christ and His Apostles as mere accommodations to Jewish prejudices and the opinions of the age in which they lived ; who could find in all that was miraculous and prophetical absolute impossibilities, except so far as sheer jugglery or shrewd conjecture might attain ; who could resolve plain and sober history into sublime poetical and mythical epics ; in fine, who could everywhere subject the *supra-natural* to the *natural* or the *rational*, thus reducing the whole of Revelation and of religion into the powerless abstractions of deism and pantheism : and where this could not be done, could groundlessly impugn the integrity of the text, or flatly deny the truth of the record.

These astounding results we ascribe in part to the systems of interpretation adopted, because, though in general they have proceeded from the subjective views and feelings of their authors, they have been adopted by acknowledged teachers of theology and expounders of the Scriptures in different churches and universities of the world, but especially of Germany, and have been the guiding principles in the application of the critical apparatus employed to explain away what was offensive and to elicit what was desired. It is gratifying to know, that there is a gradual return from these monstrous excesses to more sober and correct views of the office of the interpreter of the sacred Scriptures. Whilst some still run mad in their license, others, who have done large havoc to the Scriptures, have had their eyes opened in a measure to the reckless and ruinous results of their principles; and the necessity is beginning to be felt of coming back to a devout application of those common-sense principles of interpretation, which men ordinarily employ to ascertain the meaning of written language. Where these have been combined with learning and tact at exposition, we have had valuable contributions to the right interpretation of the Scriptures, even from men whose philosophic views allowed them to reject or oppose the doctrines which they inculcate.

Thus have I endeavored briefly, as the time made necessary, to present the views which I hold of the qualifications requisite to the fully accomplished interpreter of the Scriptures. I need not say that I make no pretensions to the possession of them in any just measure as I ought; rather would I show what I would desire to attain unto. The time is fully come when the church of Christ has need of men in this department, who thoroughly understand their business. The great enemy was never wider awake nor harder at work.

Vast erudition is arrayed against her very foundations and surest bulwarks. The great champions of damning delusions at the present day are in the church, and hold high places and occupy strong holds. Error has on its side all the corruptions of man and all the powers of hell. Already we hear, from different quarters, some stifled sounds of jubilation. But on the side of truth is He that is greater than all. The spirit of the Lord has set up his standard against them; and if we will not be recreant to His cause, we will prepare ourselves for the conflict. The heat of the battle has called forth even in Germany noble champions for the truth, who contend with mighty skill for the faith of the saints. We have already said that there we see some signs of giving way in the ranks of the enemy. America, the refuge of all nations and the protector of all creeds, may yet be the scene of a heavier conflict. The truth will doubtless prevail. The time will come when philosophy and science shall act their parts as the handmaids of religion, and not her mistresses. But let it be remembered, that her triumphs will not be achieved by the power of ignorance and supineness.

SUMMARY OF STUDIES
IN
UNION THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY.

FIRST YEAR.

Hebrew Language.
Exegesis—Matthew with Harmony; Acts.
Interpretation.
Biblical Antiquities.
Critical Introduction.
Evidences of Natural and Revealed Religion.
Biblical History.
Mental and Moral Science.
Composition and delivery of Sermons commenced.

SECOND YEAR.

Exegetical Study of the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures.
Didactic Theology.
Ecclesiastical History.
The Chaldee Language.
Composition and delivery of Sermons continued.

THIRD YEAR.

Exegetical Study of the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures
continued.
Didactic Theology continued.
Polemic Theology.

Pastoral Theology.

Ecclesiastical History.

Church Government.

Composition and delivery of Sermons.

This course, it will be seen, is very full, and is strictly adhered to. In addition, Essays and Lectures are required of the Students during the whole course, as often as is judged expedient by the Professors.

GENERAL INFORMATION.

THE situation of the Union Theological Seminary is eligible and exceedingly healthful, one mile from Prince Edward Court House, Va., and in the immediate vicinity of Hampden Sidney College.

Every person applying for admission into this Seminary, must produce satisfactory testimonials that he possesses good natural talents, and is of a prudent and discreet deportment; that he is in full communion with some regular church; and he shall also furnish to the Faculty satisfactory evidence of his proficiency in such branches of literature as are required of candidates by the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church; or, wanting these, he must submit to an examination on them by the Faculty.

Students bringing full certificates from their Presbyteries, will be considered as possessed of all necessary testimonials.

Students coming from other Theological Seminaries, are required to present testimonials of good standing and regular dismissal, before they can be received.

The proper time for entering the Seminary is at the commencement of the Seminary year, which is ten weeks after the second Tuesday in June. It is highly important that Students should be present at the opening of the session.

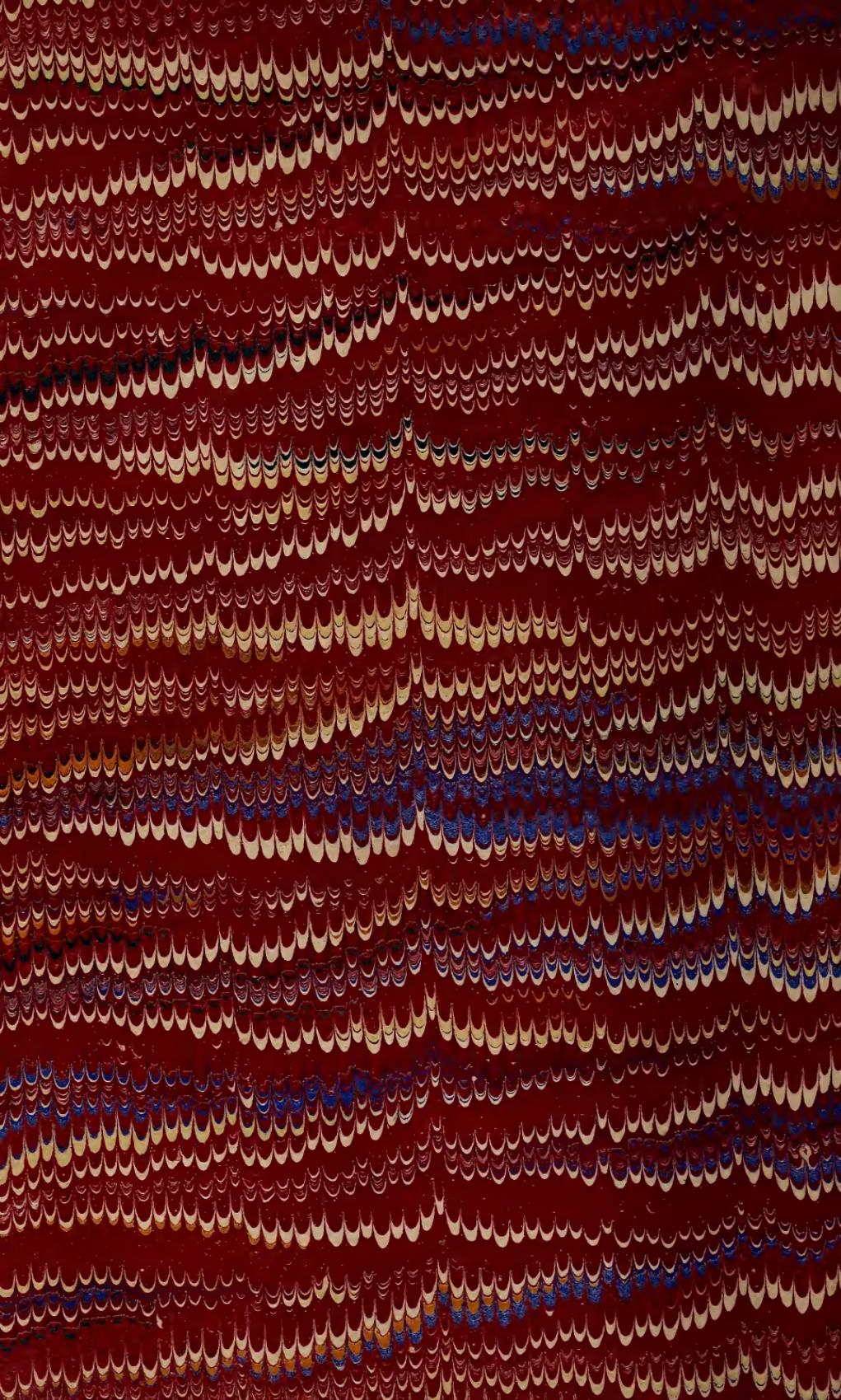
The Library contains above 4,000 volumes, which are more than ordinarily well selected, and many of them very rare and valuable. The Students have the use of this Library, free of expense, and also access to the Libraries of Hampden Sidney College; and can, on application to the Professors, have the privilege of attending the Lectures in that Institution.

There is no charge for tuition or room-rent; but each Student pays \$5 per annum to defray the contingent expenses of the Institution. The rooms are fully and comfortably furnished.

The expense of Board is \$8 per month. Opportunities may almost always be found by which a student may defray the expenses of his board by teaching an hour or two daily. Wood is obtained for \$2 25 per cord. Washing 87 1-2 per month.

VACATIONS.

The principal vacation commences on the second Tuesday in June, and continues ten weeks. There is a recess of two weeks during the session, the time of which is determined by the Faculty; usually in October.





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